NUMB. DXXXV.

The SPECTATOR.

Spem longam reſeces ——— Hor.

Thurſday, November 13. 1712.

MY Four Hundred and Seventy First Speculation turned upon the Subject of Hope in general. I deſign this Paper as a Speculation upon that vain and fooliſh Hope, which is miſemployed on Temporal Objects, and cauſes many Sorrows and Calamities in Human Life.

It is a Precept ſeveral times inculcated by *Horace*, that we ſhould not entertain an Hope of any thing in Life which lies at a great Diſtance from us: The Shortneſs and Uncertainty of our Time here gives ſuch a kind of Hope unreaſonable and abſurd. The Grave lies unſeen between us and the Object which we reach after: Where one Man lives to enjoy the Good he has in view, ten thouſand are cut off in the Purſuit of it.

It happens likewiſe unluckily, that one Hope no ſooner dies in us but another riſes up in its ſtead. We are apt to fancy that we ſhall be happy and ſatisfyed, if we poſſeſs our ſelves of ſuch and ſuch particular Enjoyments; but either by reaſon of their Emptineſs, or the natural Inquietude of the Mind, we have no ſooner gained one Point but we extend our Hopes to another. We ſtill find new inviting Scenes and Landskips lying behind thoſe which at a diſtance terminated our View.

The natural Conſequences of ſuch Reflections are theſe; that we ſhould take Care not to let our Hopes run out into too great a Length; that we ſhould ſufficiently weigh the Objects of our Hope, whether they be ſuch as we may reaſonably expect from them what we propoſe in their Fruition; and whether they are ſuch as we are pretty ſure of attaining, in caſe our Life extend it ſelf ſo far. If we hope for things which are at too great a Diſtance from us, it is poſſible that we may be intercepted by Death in our Progreſs towards them. If we hope for things of which we have not thoroughly conſidered the Value, our Diſappointment will be greater than our Pleaſure in the Fruition of them. If we hope for what we are not likely to poſſeſs, we act and think in vain, and make Life a greater Dream and Shadow than it really is.

Many of the Miſeries and Misfortunes of Life proceed from our want of Conſideration, in one or all of theſe Particulars. They are the Rocks on which the ſanguine Tribe of Lovers daily ſplit, and on which the Bankrupt, the Politician, the Alchymiſt and Projector are caſt away in every Age. Men of warm Imaginations and towring Thoughts are apt to overlook the Goods of Fortune that lie near them, for ſomething that glitters in the Sight at a diſtance; to neglect ſolid and ſubſtantial Happineſs, for what is ſhowy and ſuperficial; and to contemn that Good which lies within their reach, for that which they are not capable of attaining. Hope calculates its Schemes for a long and durable Life; preſſes forward to imaginary Points of Bliſs; and graſps at Impoſſibilities: and conſequently very often enſnares Men into Beggary, Ruine and Diſhonour.

What I have here ſaid may ſerve as a Moral to an *Arabian* Fable, which I find tranſlated into *French* by Monſieur *Galland*. The Fable has in it ſuch

such a wild, but natural, Simplicity, that I queſtion not but my Reader will be as much pleaſed with it as I have been, and that he will conſider himſelf, if he reflects on the ſeveral Amuſements of Hope which have ſometimes paſſed in his Mind, as a near Relation to the *Perſian* Glaſs-Man.

Alnaſchar, ſays the Fable, was a very idle Fellow, that never would ſet his Hand to any Buſineſs during his Father's Life. When his Father died he left him to the value of an hundred Drachmas in *Perſian* Mony. *Alnaſchar*, in order to make the beſt of it, laid it out in Glaſſes, Bottels, and the fineſt Earthen Ware. Theſe he piled up in a large open Basket, and having made choice of a very little Shop placed the Basket at his Feet, and leaned his Back upon the Wall, in Expectation of Cuſtomers. As he ſat in this Poſture with his Eyes upon the Basket, he fell into a moſt amuſing Train of Thought, and was over-heard by one of his Neighbours, as he talk'd to himſelf in the following manner. *This Basket*, ſays he, *coſt me at the Wholeſale Merchant's an Hundred Drachmas, which is all I have in the World. I ſhall quickly make two hundred of it, by ſelling it in Retail. Theſe two hundred Drachmas will in a very little while riſe to four Hundred, which of courſe will amount in time to four Thouſand. Four Thouſand Drachmas cannot fail of making Eight Thouſand. As ſoon as by this means I am Maſter of Ten Thouſand, I will lay aſide my Trade of a Glaſs-Man and turn Jeweller. I ſhall then deal in Diamonds, Pearls and all ſorts of rich Stones. When I have got together as much wealth as I can well deſire, I will make a Purchaſe of the fineſt Houſe I can find, with Lands, Slaves, Eunuchs and Horſes. I ſhall then begin to enjoy my ſelf, and make a noiſe in the World. I will not, however, ſtop there, but ſtill continue my Traffick till I have got together an Hundred Thouſand Drachmas. When I have thus made my ſelf Maſter of an hundred thouſand Drachmas, I ſhall naturally ſet my ſelf on the foot of a Prince, and will demand the Grand Viſier's Daughter in Marriage, after having repreſented to that Miniſter the Information which I have received of the Beauty, Wit, Diſcretion, and other high Qualities which his Daughter poſſeſſes. I will let him know, at the ſame time, that it is my Intention to make him a Preſent of a Thouſand Pieces of Gold on our Marriage Night. As ſoon as I have married the Grand Viſier's Daughter, I'll buy her ten black Eunuchs, the youngeſt and beſt that can be got for Mony. I muſt afterwards make my Father-in-Law a Viſit with a great Train and Equipage. And when I am placed at his Right Hand, which he will do of Courſe, if it be only to Honour his Daughter, I will give him the thouſand Pieces of Gold which I promiſed him, and afterwards, to his great Surpriſe, will preſent him another Purſe of the ſame Value, with ſome ſhort Compliment, as, Sir you ſee I am a Man of my Word. I always give more than I promiſe.*

When I have brought the Princeſs to my Houſe, I ſhall take particular care to breed in her a due Reſpect for me, before I give the Reins to Love and Dalliance. To this end I ſhall confine her to her own Apartment, make her a ſhort Viſit, and talk but little to her. Her Women will repreſent to me that ſhe is inconſolable by Reaſon of my Unkindneſs, and beg me with Tears to careſs her, and let her ſit down by me; but I ſhall ſtill remain inexorable, and will turn my Back upon her all the firſt Night. Her Mother will then come and bring her Daughter to me, as I am ſeated upon my Sofa. The Daughter, with Tears in her Eyes, will fling her ſelf at my Feet, and beg of me to receive her into my Favour: Then will I, to imprint in her a thorough Veneration for my Perſon, draw up my Legs and ſpurn her from me with my Foot, in ſuch a manner that ſhe ſhall fall down ſeveral Paces from the Sofa.

Alnaſchar was entirely ſwallowed up in this chimerical Viſion, and could not forbear acting with his Foot what he had in his Thoughts: So that unluckily ſtriking his Basket of Brittle Ware, which was the Foundation of all his Grandeur, he kicked his Glaſſes to a great diſtance from him into the Street, and broke them into ten thouſand Pieces.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

By her Majeſty's Company of Comedians.

AT the Theatre Royal in Drury-Lane this Thurſday being the 13th Day of November, will be A Play call'd, The Rival Queens, With the Death of Alexander the Great. By Her Majeſty's Command no Perſons are to be behind the Scenes.

AT the Queen's Theatre in the Hay-Market, Saturday next being the 15th Day of November, preſented an Opera call'd The Triumph of Love. Being a Collection of Muſick compoſ'd by Scarlatti, Bononcini, Ariosti, Conſtantini, Gaſparini, and ſeveral other the moſt Celebrated Italian Maſters.

At the Requeſt of ſeveral Ladies

For the Benefit of Signiora Celotti.

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